

SUBJECT: Purchase and sale of certain fish

COMMITTEE: State Recreational Resources — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Kuempel, Siebert, Black, B. Turner, Woolley
0 nays
4 absent — Hightower, Horn, Oakley, Rabuck

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, March 22 — voice vote

WITNESSES: For — Tim C. Moore, Texas Aquaculture Association; Jim Sagnes, Texas Shrimp Association
Against — None
On — James E. Robertson and Hal Osburn, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

DIGEST: SB 733 would remove four species of fish (cobia, king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, and wahoo) from the list of protected fish under Parks and Wildlife Code prohibitions on possession and sale or barter. The bill would also state that in addition to red drum, five other species of fish (crappie, flathead catfish, striped bass, white bass and bass of the genus *Micropterus*) must be farm-raised if imported into Texas.

The bill would redefine the exemption for farm-raised fish to apply only to fish raised on a pelleted prepared feed product.

SB 733 would also authorize the Parks and Wildlife Commission to delegate to the director the authority to immediately modify state coastal fishery regulations to make them consistent with federal regulations in the exclusive economic zone (the area of coastal waters controlled by the federal government between the portion controlled by the state of Texas — the first nine nautical miles — until international waters begin at 200 miles).

The bill would take effect on September 1, 1995.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department protects a number of different species of fish from being harvested in the wild in order to protect the fish as a natural resource. Four species are listed among those protected whose habitats are now almost exclusive within the exclusive economic zone, that is they are protected by the federal government. Removing these species from the protected list would allow commercial fishing enterprises to save time and paperwork with the TPWD and concentrate on the federal regulations.

The bill would also add five species of fish to the list of those that must be farm-raised if they are imported into the state. This requirement would help to protect these fish as a natural resource.

Additionally, allowing the commission to delegate authority to the director to change coastal fishery regulations to coincide with federal law would help ensure that regulations governing fishing are consistent.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

No apparent opposition.